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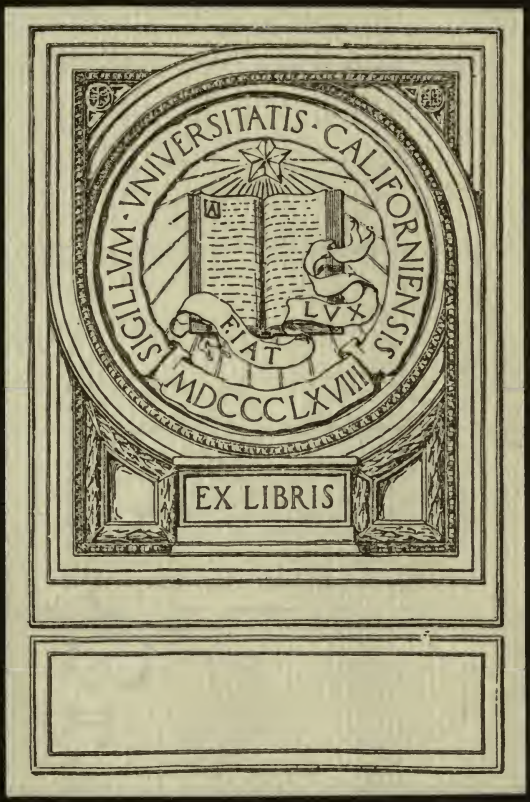
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Vocational Advisement and Placement

BY

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By Arnold Levitas

THE United States Goverment is today confronted with no greater obligation than that of adjusting the unusual conditions created by the war with regard to many of the men who are now returning from the battle-fronts of Europe.

By far the most important task will be that of developing to usefulness the men who have in some way been handicapped by the loss of hands, or feet, or hearing, or sight.

After these men will have been put into physical shape and be sufficiently strong to take up some kind of work, the Government aims to give them a training which will prepare them for some useful occupation—so that it may not be necessary for them to become a burden to the community and to subsist on charity.

It is a well-established fact that only a very small percentage of the men so maimed could not be reclaimed to a certain amount of usefulness. While it may not be possible to train a handicapped man to regain his full powers, it is quite probable that many of them will lose only a certain percentage of their

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efficiency after they will have received the training contemplated by the Government.

Besides the training-school for these men, it will also be necessary to establish a bureau which will deal with the vocational advisement and placement of the disabled soldier and sailor. Such a bureau will determine the capabilities of the applicant from various viewpoints and his fitness for certain work.

It will be necessary, first of all, to ascertain the candidate's general qualifications. If he has been engaged in some industrial or commercial pursuit previous to his enlistment, it might be possible to have him adapt himself to the same or some other branch of his previous occupation. Where this is not possible —on account of his peculiar handicap or general unfitness for that kind of work—it might be well to try him for some other kind of activity.

To keep the man to the work in which he has previously been engaged, or even in some other branch of the same industry, would, of course, be most advantageous all round. It might minimize the efforts in his training; it would tend to keep from overcrowding other trades; and it would not interfere with the rules and regulations of existing trades unions. Necessity, however, should not be set aside by any other factor, and the best interests of the candidate in question should be the most important condition to consider.

Every man appearing before the bureau officials is presumed to possess certain qualifications. To these should be added his previous training and experience. These may be called his assets. From these assets we are to deduct his liabilities—which will be, first of all, in the form of his physical handicap, created by the ravages of the war, and, secondly, by certain deficiencies of his own.

The bureau for advisement and placement, composed of men possessing the proper experience and qualifications, will be able—through a thorough examination—to establish the status of the candidate. When, after carefully weighing all conditions regarding the candidate, this is sufficiently established, the man should be recommended for a certain kind of training.

The second task, then, of this bureau would be to cooperate with the training-schools of the Government, and advise the authorities of those schools of the kind of training to be given to each one of the candidates. If, on report of the officials of the training-schools, some candidate does not show any promise of ability in certain directions, he may be tried—after another examination by the above bureau—in some other field of endeavor. The first few weeks of his training in any particular work should be regarded simply as an experiment; and, if the candidate shows adaptability for his work, his training may then be approved by the bureau and he may be permitted to continue until completion.

Under these circumstances, a man will be given every possible opportunity to find himself in the particular work for which he is best fitted. In fact, this vocational guidance should prove so beneficial as to neutralize some of the deficiencies created by the maimed condition of the body.

Another task of this bureau would be to negotiate with many of the industrial and commercial establishments of the country regarding the employment of these men, who are to be trained for useful work in these various establishments. It would be well to get the advice of the heads of these firms with regard to their particular wants in the laber market, so that the men may be trained on practical lines and that

they may fit into the plans of these industrial concerns.

It stands to reason that, in order to get the best results, it would be necessary to take into consideration the fact that these handicapped men cannot be made as useful as others who are physically sound. Therefore, the matter of compensation should be so arranged as to result beneficially to employer as well as employee.

It may, however, be well to note that in many cases the physical handicap will create only a negligible depreciation in the man's ability; and, considering the good effects produced by proper vocational guidance and training, there should be little, if any, change in such cases from the usual compensation for the work.

In negotiating with the buyers of labor, it should be kept in mind that the main object of the bureau will be to create a place for usefulness for the maimed men, and, therefore, we must eliminate any element which might seem like charity or favoritism. Under these circumstances, it would be necessary to allow for a certain amount of independence on the part of the handicapped employee—such, for instance, as would make him feel that his usefulness will not end with his severance of employment in the particular establishment where he was first placed by the bureau, or that, in holding his job, he does so because of his value to the employer and not because the employer is actuated by patriotism or sympathy.

Heretofore, employers of labor have generally been dealing with men physically sound, and have paid wages which called for 100 per cent of efficiency. Since, under these new circumstances, it will rarely be possible to attain 100 per cent of efficiency, in the strict interpretation of that term, we have a new

problem before us. Employers will have to be convinced that in employing these handicapped men they will not suffer financially or commercially, and ways will have to be found where such men may actually prove their value beyond any doubt.

That it is possible to make these men valuable to employers of labor may be seen from the following illustration, where one of the useful trades (the printing trade) is analyzed for the particular purpose.

We may divide the printing trade into 17 different phases of activity, and examine how these handicapped men may be employed in the various branches and their percentile loss of efficiency in each.

*PERCENTILE LOSS OF EFFICIENCY IN PRINTING TRADE DUE TO LOSS OF LIMBS, HEARING, OR SIGHT

PRINTING OCCUPATIONAL BRANCH	BLIND	DEAF	ONE ARM	ONE LEG	LEG-LESS
Estimator	50	25	50	2	10
Layout-Man	100	10	50	2	10
Job-Compositor	100	5	75	5	25
Proofreader	100	10	2	2	2
Stone-Hand	100	2	100	25	100
Foreman Composing-Room	100	10	10	1	50
Foreman Press-Room	100	15	50	1	50
Machine-Operator	100	5	75	10	20
Platen Pressman	100	10	60	90	100
Cylinder Pressman	100	10	60	90	100
Web Pressman	100	10	100	90	100
Printing Salesman	75	5	5	5	100
Proprietor	50	1	10	2	10
Compositor (Straight)	100	2	75	5	10
Feeder (Platen)	100	2	100	10	25
Feeder (Cylinder)	100	2	85	5	25
Paper-Cutter	100	2	100	20	100
Average Loss of Efficiency	93	7	60½	25	50
Average Value to Trade	7	93	39½	75	50

*Table prepared by F. K. Phillips, of American Type Founders Company

It may be worth while, as a matter of illustration, which may also be useful as a specimen for other trades, to explain the various elemental branches of the printing trade, mentioned in the preceding table, and their possible use for the purpose in question.

Estimator

1. Work consists of figuring costs of materials and time and furnishing prices of printing. Loss of efficiency due to loss of one arm, one leg, or even both legs, is comparatively slight.

Layout-Man

2. Work consists of planning jobs and advertisements. Ability to write, draw, and design is necessary. Not required to stand or move around in search of materials. Loss of efficiency due to loss of one leg, or even both legs, comparatively slight.

Job Compositor

3. Work consists of setting type of various sizes and faces. Requires considerable moving around. Loss of efficency due to deafness or loss of one leg almost negligible. Loss of one arm or both legs would almost incapacitate a man for this work.

Proofreader

4. Work consists of detecting errors in the product of printers. Requires thorough grounding in essentials of grammar, spelling, and structural English. Does not require moving around. Loss of efficiency due to deafness is considerable, as proofreader requires a copyholder to read to him from copy for his comparison with proof. Loss of one arm, one leg, or both legs would decrease efficiency only slightly.

Stoneman

5. Makes up and locks up forms of type. Requires much standing and moving around. This

work could be done by a deaf person or one who has lost one leg. Could not be useful if a man has lost sight, one arm, or both legs.

Foreman of Composing-Room

6. Work is supervisory in character. Could be done by deaf, one-armed, one-legged, or legless person.

Foreman of Press-Room

7. Work is supervisory in character. It could be done by deaf, one-legged, legless, or one-armed man.

Machine Operator

8. Work is similiar to operating typewriter. Workman is enabled to sit down. Work could be done dy deaf, one-legged, or legless man.

Platen Pressman

9. Work consists of making ready jobs on small presses. Workman required to stand and use both hands. Could be done by deaf or one-legged person.

Cylinder or Automatic Pressman

10. Work consists of making ready on cylinder or automatic presses. Deaf person could do the work, but with a loss of a certain amount of efficiency. Great skill required. Workman required to stand and use both hands.

Web Pressman

11. Work consists of operating newspaper presses. Deaf person could do the work, but with a loss of efficiency. Loss of sight or one limb would prohibit doing work of this character.

Printing Salesman

12. Work consists of soliciting printing business and submitting estimates. Could be done by a person with loss of hearing, one arm, or one leg.

Proprietor

13. Executive work. Could be done by a person with loss of hearing, one arm, one leg, or both legs.

Straight-Matter Compositor

14. Work consists of setting plain matter, usually on country newspaper. Deafness or loss of one leg would not lower efficiency. Loss of both legs would not materially reduce capacity for production, but would reduce efficiency, owing to necessity of requiring assistance in moving about.

Feeder on Platen Press

15. Work consists of placing sheets of paper in press and removing same after they are printed. Requires both arms and hands. Deafness or loss of one leg would not decrease efficiency. Loss of both legs would reduce efficiency, owing to necessity of assistance in moving to and from press.

Feeder on Cylinder Press

16. Work requires skill in placing large sheets of paper to guides previous to printing. Deafness or loss of one leg would not decrease efficiency. Loss of right arm would prove a hindrance, but work could be done if left arm is retained. Loss of both legs would decrease efficiency to a great extent, unless a seat attached to press (which could easily be done) were provided.

Paper-Cutter

17. This work requires the cutting of paper on either hand-lever or power paper-cutter. Both hands are required. Deafness would decrease efficiency. Loss of one leg would decrease efficiency slightly. Loss of both legs would incapacitate.

It will be seen from this enumeration that the printing trade, like many other trades, has a great

deal to offer in the proposed reconstruction work which the Government is to take up.

It might be added that some of the branches of the trade here enumerated have been taught in some of the schools of the country. They have been taught, in most cases, as supplementary to the regular training in the shop. It has been firmly established, however, that the subjects could be taught with success and be made to be of positive benefit to the student.

Almost all other trades may be arranged in the same way as the printing trade for the practical purposes of teaching the crippled soldiers and sailors.

In order to get the most beneficial results, it would be necessary to employ experts of every trade taught —not only in the training-school, but also in the bureau which is to take up the vocational advisement and placement of these men.

If an industrial survey were made for the purpose of discovering the best opportunities for cripples in the industrial field, it would help to systematize the trades into branches of activity and show in what particular branches these disabled men could best be used.

This industrial survey may include visits to the factories, manufacturers' associations, trade unions, and editors of trade journals. Valuable information may be had from all these sources, and may be applied to good advantage.

If the placement officer were to come to the employer with a systematized arrangment similar to the one arranged for the printing trade, it would be a good deal easier to convince him of the value of the trained cripple for the work in his establishment.

The duties of the bureau, however, should not be considered as finished with the placing of the man.

It would be necessary, for some time, at least, to follow up the fortunes of these people. In most cases, these men may become sufficiently independent not to require any further protection; but there may be expected certain cases where men will have to be taken care of for some time after they have received their first job.

It is quite possible that, after a disabled man has been trained and placed, he will not be able, because of his handicap, to earn the normal wage necessary for his maintenance. In a case of this nature, it would be necessary for the bureau to recommend certain adjustment to be made by the Government which will keep the man from want.

Although this matter of charity is something from which we desire to get away, we must realize that, probably in a small percentage of cases,that will come into calculation. It is unavoidable. The bureau will be trying to help all the men to help themselves; and, so far as it will succeed in this, it will be of material benefit.

But where this will not be altogether possible, it would clearly be within the province and the duty Government to help to take care of these men who sacrificed their efficiency in its service. Besides, it would be to the interest of the Government to keep these men from becoming public charges.

Vocational guidance of this kind should result in time in the solving of this great problem confronting this country and should gradually tend to eliminate the detriments to the individual and to the community created by the war.

It is also hoped that this vocational guidance, which has come as a dire necessity, will in time develop for general uses—so that this work, which is contemplated to relieve a temporary condition, may

show its lasting and permanent benefits on a much larger scale. For, it stands to reason that, if people generally were to choose the occupation best fitted for them—which is now rarely the case—they would not only benefit themselves but also the community at large.

One of the important factors in the work of reconstruction is the cooperation of the public. Although the public is sympathetic, its sympathies are often misdirected, because it has not made a proper study of the conditions. The people are ready with alms, where this is a matter which should be eliminated as much as possible. If thoughtful consideration were given to the subject, the general tendency would be to make the cripple a useful citizen. The duty of a bureau for advisement and placement of the disabled soldier and sailor is to institute a campaign of public education on this very important subject.

Another matter for serious consideration would be that of establishing a research department for the purpose of studying the work which has been done by other institutions. Such a department could become very helpful in bringing before the bureau the good points which have been brought out by other organizations and which have been found useful for adoption. It would also bring to light the mistakes which have been made and which should be guarded against. The results of the investigations of this department should prove of great economical as well as practical value.

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